

CLAIMS:

1. A method for obtaining a recombinant fusion protein comprising a scaffold of a C-terminal core protein of C4bp alpha chain, said recombinant fusion protein being capable of forming multimers in soluble form in a prokaryotic host cell, the method including the steps of
 - (i) providing a prokaryotic host cell carrying a nucleic acid encoding said recombinant protein operably linked to a promoter functional in said prokaryotic cell;
 - (ii) culturing the host cell under conditions wherein said recombinant protein is expressed; and
 - (iii) recovering the recombinant protein wherein said protein is recovered in multimeric form without performing a scaffold refolding step.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the recombinant protein is present at least at a concentration of at least 2 mg/l of cell culture.
3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the host prokaryotic cell is *E. coli*.
4. A method according to claim 3 wherein *E. coli* is selected from strain C41(DE3) [B96070444], C43(DE3) [B96070445] or C0214(DE3) [NCIMB40884], or other strains resistant to the toxicity of overexpressed recombinant proteins.
5. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the recombinant protein comprises the C4bp core protein fused to a heterologous polypeptide.

6. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein said heterologous polypeptide is a TNF receptor protein.
7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said heterologous polypeptide is a BAFF-binding portion of BAFF-R.
8. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein said heterologous polypeptide is a thrombopoietin agonist peptide IEGPTLRQWLAARA or somatostatin.
9. An isolated nucleic acid comprising a sequence which encodes a fusion protein of a C-terminal core protein of C4bp alpha chain and BAFF-R.
10. An isolated nucleic acid comprising a sequence which encodes a fusion protein of a C-terminal core protein of C4bp alpha chain and a thrombopoietin agonist peptide IEGPTLRQWLAARA or somatostatin.
11. A prokaryotic expression vector comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a fusion protein of a C-terminal core protein of C4bp alpha chain and a heterologous polypeptide operably linked to a promoter functional in prokaryotic cells.
12. A bacterial host cell transformed with the expression vector of claim 11.
13. A protein comprising a C-terminal core protein of C4bp alpha chain fused to BAFF-R.

14. A protein comprising a C-terminal core protein of C4bp alpha chain fused to a thrombopoietin agonist peptide IEGPTLRLQWLAAARA.
15. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 8 which further comprises formulating said recombinant protein into a composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.
16. A method for treating a condition in a patient, the condition being associated with raised serum levels of BAFF, said method comprising the steps of administering to a patient a therapeutically effective amount of the protein of claim 14 or nucleic acid of claim 9.
17. A method according to claim 16 wherein the condition is systemic lupus erythematosis.
18. A eukaryotic expression vector comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the protein of claim 13 or 14 operably linked to a promoter functional in eukaryotic cells.
19. A eukaryotic host cell transformed with the vector of claim 18.
20. Use of the expression vector of claim 18 in a method of treatment of the human or animal body.
21. A eukaryotic expression vector comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding a recombinant fusion protein comprising a scaffold of a C-terminal core protein of C4bp alpha chain for the use in the treatment of the human or animal body.